

Caltrans Adds Muscle for Heavier Workload

State Budget Includes More Money to Hire Staff, Deliver Wide Range of Projects

The outlook for California’s beleaguered transportation network continues to brighten with the passage of the state budget that directs more money to Caltrans to make needed improvements.

The 2018-19 fiscal year budget authorized \$13.8 billion for Caltrans, an increase of \$1.9 billion from the previous budget year. With the increase, the Department can fill an additional 1,237 vacancies in this budget year, up to a maximum of 20,258 positions, and fund a spectrum of infrastructure improvements made possible by the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 (Senate Bill 1).

SB 1 created a Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account that is projected to provide \$1.8 billion this fiscal year to tackle long-deferred maintenance needs on the highway system and local roads.

SB 1 also is projected to raise \$2.7 billion this fiscal year for larger-scale state and local capital projects, local transportation system assistance, and other maintenance-related projects. Specifically, those revenues will finance efforts to upgrade overloaded freight and commuter corridors, make repairs to bridges, drainages and traffic management systems, support alternate modes of transportation such as bicycling or walking, intercity and commuter rail service, and climate planning.

Internally, the budget gives Caltrans \$14 million to replace obsolete information technology resources,

and provides an additional \$10.4 million to fortify cyber security that protects the Department’s data resources.

Because of the extra work generated by SB 1, 872 of the 1,237 new budgeted positions are dedicated to the project delivery process, including architectural and engineering services. Caltrans projects spending \$4.6 billion on capital projects this fiscal year, its highest category of expenditure, and about \$2 billion on capital outlay support to bring that work to the construction stage.

Of the 20,258 positions budgeted for this fiscal year, 8,770 are designated for capital outlay support — Caltrans’ largest workforce sector. The Department’s Division of Maintenance, shouldering the labor-intensive duties of maintaining, rehabilitating and repairing the highway system, has the next highest employee total at 6,522.

Even with the overall increase allotted for personnel for the fiscal year, Caltrans will still have almost 10 percent fewer budgeted positions than it did in fiscal year 2008-2009, a decade before. For that fiscal year, Caltrans had a budget of slightly over \$13.8 billion — about the same as 2018-19 — and 22,277 budgeted positions, compared with 20,258 authorized under the most recent budget. The Department has found more efficient ways to deliver projects in recent years, through money-saving approaches prior to construction and cost reductions in operations. **MM**

Caltrans Budget and Staffing Levels Since 2011-12

